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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Letter dated 3 March 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. A. V. Kozyrev, on the subject of your report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era" (A/C.1/47/7).

I request you to have this letter circulated as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly under agenda item 63.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

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ANNEX

Letter dated 2 March 1993 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation addressed to the Secretary-General

Your report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era" has been noted with great interest in the Russian Federation. We regard the report as an important and timely initiative.

The report persuasively testifies to the considerably increased significance of genuine disarmament measures in the new international conditions. Especially in the conditions of the post-bloc world, United Nations bodies in the field of disarmament can become more effective instruments of multilateral diplomacy. We believe that the international community should concentrate its efforts on the following priority issues on the disarmament agenda.

First. Recent years have been a time of intense diplomatic activity in the area of arms regulation and this activity has culminated in the conclusion of unprecedented disarmament agreements. Among the most noteworthy of these agreements are the Treaty between Russia and the United States of America on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Weapons, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

Today, the issues of strict and consistent implementation of the major agreements that have been concluded and maximum mobilization of existing resources for this purpose have come to the fore. It is important at the same time to strike a balance between the dynamics of the process of eliminating weapons and the achievement of steady economic growth in those countries which bear a heavy burden as a result of disarmament. There is little point in rushing from an insane arms race into a mindless disarmament race.

As our experience shows, it is an extremely difficult matter to eliminate on one's own the distorting effects of a military economy. Compliance with obligations under existing agreements is costing Russia alone an amount which exceeds the national income of some relatively developed countries. It is therefore of the utmost importance today to have an effective strategy of international partnership for the practical elimination of weapons and the retooling of military industries. Russia is not asking for special treatment for itself. Such a partnership is needed by all countries, developed and developing alike.

The United Nations can make an important contribution in such efforts. The Organization is an appropriate forum for conducting a dialogue on conversion. At the same time, it could encourage practical steps by States to attract investments in converted and high-tech industries, to develop rational criteria for exports, especially of defensive weapons, and to channel the resources thereby obtained to meet the requirements of conversion.

Second. Russia has consistently advocated the adoption of effective measures for strengthening the existing non-proliferation regimes. The key element here is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its transformation into a universal agreement without any time-limit, which, in our view, is a major objective of the review conference on the Treaty scheduled for 1995.

We have serious concerns about the fact that accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is sometimes surrounded with additional conditions, and is depicted as a special "concession" to the international community, for which the latter must "pay a price". We believe that such an approach must be met with an appropriate response also on the part of the United Nations in the spirit of the decisions adopted at the Summit Meeting of the Security Council which took place in January 1992.

Third. With drastic reductions in the nuclear weapons of Russia and the United States, bringing that class of weapons to a low level, the world community is entitled to expect other nuclear Powers - the United Kingdom, France and China - to join in the process of nuclear disarmament in the foreseeable future.

Silence at the nuclear launch sites of Russia, the United States and France creates favourable conditions for solving the problem of banning nuclear tests. Russia confirms its readiness to participate in the speedy elaboration of an international treaty on the full prohibition of nuclear tests. It is the duty of all Governments to step up their efforts to that end, utilizing, inter alia, the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

Fourth. Such an ordering of priorities in the field of multilateral disarmament would bring into sharp focus the task of enhancing the effectiveness of the international machinery of discussions and negotiations in this field. The existing mechanisms here - the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament - needs to be carefully and comprehensively restructured, with improved mutual coordination of activities.

The merging of the problems of disarmament and international security in the First Committee is already a positive step, reflecting a modern, comprehensive approach to these questions. It is important to pursue this to an increasing extent, keeping in sight all the dimensions of international security, including its economic and environmental aspects. These issues call for further rationalization of the work of the First Committee.

Russia views the process already begun of revitalizing the United Nations Disarmament Commission in a positive light. In the longer term, the Commission should move on to the pre-negotiational elaboration of specific issues for subsequent referral to negotiating forums, especially the Conference on Disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament needs to be restructured. It needs to acquire flexibility in its forms and methods of work, retaining its primary function as a negotiating body. In the longer term, the Conference might profitably evolve into a unique "umbrella forum", under which it would be possible to conduct multilateral negotiations on disarmament and on measures for confidence-building and transparency. Those purposes would be served, in our view, by a significant expansion of this negotiating body through the inclusion of those States which, up to the present time have formally applied for membership, in other words, an increase of about one and a half times. Questions of the practical reform of the Conference could then be taken up, taking into account the contribution of these new members in shaping the character of this forum.

In general, there is a need to impart greater organizational harmony and special "compactness" to the system of global machinery for disarmament. We are also in favour of strengthening and consolidating the disarmament structures of the United Nations Secretariat.

Fifth. The integration of arms control into the broad context of the maintenance of international security should also be carried out at other levels. An essential element of the peace-keeping operations carried on under the United Nations flag would be, in our view, the subsequent drafting of effective agreements that would guarantee against a resumption of military operations, with a strong "disarmament" basis. An important contribution to this could be a broader application of the experience of dismantling Iraq's war machine under United Nations control and of the conduct of peacemaking operations in Yugoslavia and Cambodia and in other regions of the world, for example in the form of a report by the United Nations Secretary-General.

It would be possible for the United Nations to consider the question of adopting a special "code of conduct" for the parties to conflicts between nations, which, among other restrictive measures, would provide for prohibition of the use of military aviation and rocket-artillery systems, and, at a subsequent stage, of armour technology. Such measures could include a moratorium on the transfer of such weapons to the parties in conflict, a system of supervising observance of a regime of non-use of the most modern weapons systems and the exchange of information concerning violations of that regime, and a request to the Security Council for possible coercive action against the opposing sides in the event that they use military aviation or rocket-artillery systems.

It would also be worth making an attempt to bring up to date the clause concerning provisional measures to be undertaken by the Security Council under Article 40 of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to defusing dangerous crises and regional conflicts. Additional measures could include a cease-fire, separation of the opposing sides and the setting up of demilitarized zones and "humanitarian" corridors.

The United Nations, founded in the name of noble goals following the end of the most destructive of wars, has performed its key mission - averting a new world war - in one of the most complex and peace-threatening epochs of human history.

Today the Organization faces new challenges. An important role in the activities of the world community must be allotted to integrating, globalizing and activating efforts in the field of arms control.

A. KOZYREV